



# STEFAN I. MYCHAJLIW

## ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER

June 22, 2021

Mr. Mehran Kohansieh  
Kohan Retail Investment Group  
1010 Northern Boulevard  
Suite 212  
Great Neck, NY 11024

Dear Mr. Kohansieh:

As the independently elected Erie County Comptroller and Town of Hamburg taxpayer I have serious concerns about the future of the McKinley Mall property in Hamburg, New York that you apparently purchased, according to published reports. We need strong and responsible stewards of this property, not an absentee owner that will let the once booming shopping center fall into deeper depths of financial loss. Erie County taxpayers and the Town of Hamburg will suffer greatly if sales tax and property tax revenues continue to plummet.

That being said, our government wants you to succeed. We all benefit with a thriving mall where businesses thrive. To that end, I propose communicating once per month to see what our county and town government can do collaboratively to transform this almost empty property into a successful business venture.

While the sale is being finalized, I wanted to offer my thoughts on measures that can be taken to increase foot traffic with your newest investment. The Auto Bureau is a busy division of the Erie County Clerk's office, handling the transactions of thousands of motorists each year. Just last month a newly created DMV office was opened in the Eastern Hills Mall property in Williamsville, New York, a suburb to the north of Buffalo. Opening that Auto Bureau allowed for taxpayers in the Northtowns to be better served, while also bringing more people to the Mall. They may then spend some time shopping and spending money.

While a similar DMV office was recently opened in the Southgate Plaza in West Seneca, New York, I propose a similar arrangement for the McKinley Mall. By opening a DMV office there, you are automatically bringing thousands of customers to your shopping center and increasing the number of people who will potentially then spend money in your stores. I am happy to work with Erie County Clerk Michael Kearns to help set up future communications about this proposal, if it is in the best interests of the Clerk's Office and the motorists they serve.

We are a very vehicle-focused community. While there is public transportation, the majority of Erie County taxpayers tend to own or lease cars. Because we are also situated near two Great Lakes, the Niagara River and other waterways, there are also a significant number of boat owners here in Erie County. These are people that need to conduct business at our area DMVs.

The Eastern Hill Mall location was renovated in part using CARES Act funds. I should note that in 2020 and 2021, Erie County is receiving a total of \$338 million in federal funds intended to help communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. A big part of that recovery is helping those cities, towns, and villages bounce back from tax revenue lost as businesses struggled. With our economy reopening, people have shown they are eager to get back out and return to some sense of normalcy, and that includes a desire to spend their hard-earned dollars shopping, recreating, and enjoying all the pre-pandemic activities.

By pursuing a new DMV office inside the McKinley Mall, you will be serving Southtowns residents by offering them a tremendous convenience. You will increase traffic to your location by simply providing this service. I also believe, given that the Northtowns location was able to utilize CARES Act funds, there may be opportunities for Erie County to utilize federal dollars for some of the required renovations for a McKinley Mall Auto Bureau.

Again, congratulations on your purchase. I look forward to discussing this matter further with you at your earliest convenience. While I firmly believe the limited role of government is to create a culture where businesses can thrive, we also need responsible private sector partners that care about their investment. We most certainly will not tolerate absentee business owners that will not care for their property in the Town of Hamburg. I will do whatever I can in my public position to help return the McKinley Mall to financial prominence. That cannot happen without a willing private sector partner that is committed to making a strong investment in the mall property.

Sincerely,



HON. STEFAN I. MYCHAJLIW  
Erie County Comptroller

Cc: Hon. Michael Kearns, Erie County Clerk  
Hon. James Shaw, Hamburg Town Supervisor  
Erie County Legislature  
Hamburg Councilman Shawn Connolly  
Hamburg Councilwoman Elizabeth Farrell  
Hamburg Councilwoman Karen Hoak  
Hamburg Councilman Michael Petrie